United Nations A/51/PV.19

General Assembly
Fifty-first Session

Official Records

19th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 2 October 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail ..... (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 119 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/51/366/Add.2)

The President: In a letter contained in document A/51/366/Add.2, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications dated 17 and 20 September 1996, Equatorial Guinea has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I call now on His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al-Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure, Sir, to extend to you our sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. We are confident that you will lead the work of the Assembly to success. I cannot fail to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, for his leadership during the Assembly's historic fiftieth session. I would also like to express our appreciation to His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts in the service of the purposes of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and the achievement of its lofty ideals.

A series of internal conflicts and explosive situations has threatened certain States. The world faces ethnic extremism and national conflicts caused by mass migrations, flows of refugees, environment deterioration and natural disasters. Such problems have not been met with the rapid economic and political changes that would form the cornerstone of the new international order to which the whole world aspires. A complete vision of that order, its rules and means, has not yet materialized. We should all work towards an international system that is just, balanced and comprehensive.

The vital and effective role played by the United Nations in dealing with international issues, in the maintenance of international peace and security and in other areas, the value of which cannot be denied or underestimated for the establishment of the principles of that international system, requires reform of the United Nations if we are to achieve the desired results. Reform should begin with reactivating the General Assembly to

96-86365 (E)

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enable it to act effectively in a manner that would enhance its credibility in the eyes of world public opinion.

We have also mentioned the need to reform the Security Council and increase its effectiveness in a manner that would reflect the geographic, economic and political situation of certain States, in a manner that would reflect the new international order, and would equip the Council to bear its heavy responsibilities.

The task of maintaining international peace and security is particularly important at a time of international change; the international community should take steps to deploy early preventive measures, since this is the best way to avoid the eruption and conflagration of conflicts, instead of resorting to political or military measures to end them, which can only lead to incomplete and unjust solutions. Therefore, it is important to reiterate the vital and effective role that could be played by regional organizations in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

Cooperation between the United Nations and other regional organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference should be promoted, since preventive diplomacy and early warning are the best way to prevent conflicts from erupting and to find peaceful solutions.

The question of disarmament is of great importance in terms of the establishment of international peace and security. It can be achieved only by curbing the arms race and, in particular, the race in weapons of mass destruction. We believe that the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) requires more support and ratification by all States to give the Treaty a global character. The State of Qatar reaffirms the need for Israel to join the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency as an initial step towards establishing a Middle East free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We believe that the interests of the stability and security of the region should compel Israel to do this.

The State of Qatar, on the basis of the wise approach of His Royal Highness, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, reaffirms its regional and international commitments and undertakes to work through international and regional organizations to promote international peace and security. We associate ourselves with our brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council and other friendly States in the quest to promote peace and security in the Gulf region, due to its vital importance to the whole world. We are also making tireless efforts to establish friendly and constructive relations with all States of the region, based on good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, respect for legitimacy and the solution of conflicts through dialogue, mediation or international law through the International Court of Justice.

On the basis of this principle, we support the attempt to find such a solution to the dispute between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the islands of Abu Musa and Lesser and Greater Tunb. We have expressed our great satisfaction at the agreement signed between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea in Paris last month regarding the peaceful settlement of the dispute over Greater Hanish through international mediation and arbitration, peacefully and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in a manner that will serve the security and stability of the Red Sea region and promote bilateral relations, good-neighbourliness and common interests between those two countries and bolster international peace and security. At the same time, we would like to express our appreciation to the friendly Government of France for its efforts towards a peaceful settlement of this dispute.

The State of Qatar has expressed its brotherly feelings and sympathy with the people of Iraq, who are living under extremely difficult conditions due to the sanctions imposed on them. On the basis of that, we have welcomed the oil-for-food agreement between Iraq and the United Nations regarding the application of Security Council resolution 986 (1995), since this would mitigate the suffering of the Iraqi people and enable them to meet their need for food and medication. We call upon the United Nations to create the conditions necessary for implementation of that resolution.

We would also like to reaffirm our commitment to the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, and the principle of non-interference in its internal affairs. Yet at the same time, Iraq is required fully to implement all Security Council resolutions, which should stay within the context of international legitimacy and the norms of international law.

We express our great concern at the suffering of the people of Libya due to the sanctions imposed on them.

We associate ourselves in this regard with many other Member States regarding the approach followed in the implementation of the sanctions, and we call for the creation of necessary guarantees for the equitable application of the sanctions so that international interests are safeguarded and the suffering of the people as a result of the sanctions is alleviated.

The State of Qatar has worked to promote the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. We therefore took part in the Arab Summit Conference in Cairo in June 1996, when Arab leaders reaffirmed that the achievement of peace requires full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian territories, including Arab Jerusalem, conditions for the Palestinians to establish an independent State of its own with Jerusalem as its capital, and the full and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon pursuant to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1975) and in accordance with the principle of land for peace accepted by the Arabs and by Israel as a serious basis for peace in the Middle East.

From this rostrum, we would like to call upon the new Israeli Government to continue its efforts to ensure a successful peace process in the Middle East and to take account of United Nations resolutions, especially those that were the background of the Madrid Conference, and the principle of land for peace, in accordance with agreements already reached. We would like the Israeli Government to reconsider its position in order to give momentum to the peace process, to establish conditions conducive to cooperation among the peoples of the region and to achieve a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We call upon the two co-sponsors of the peace process and the international community in its entirety to support the peace process while at the same time providing the necessary economic and political assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority.

The State of Qatar expresses its deep concern at Israel's continued confiscation of Palestinian territories, the establishment of settlements in the occupied Arab territories and the bringing in of settlers in violation of international decisions, the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the provisions adopted at the Madrid Conference.

These settler activities in the Syrian Golan, the occupied Palestinian territories and Arab Jerusalem should cease without delay. We would also like to reiterate our rejection of any attempt to change the demographic character of the Arab city of Jerusalem or its legal status, specifically its geographic and geopolitical status before 4 June 1967. We call upon the international community to guarantee Israel's implementation of binding international resolutions regarding Jerusalem, in particular Security Council resolution 252 (1968), since the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without solving the issue of Arab Jerusalem and the problems of the Palestinian refugees, who should be granted the right to return in accordance with binding international decisions and the resolutions of the United Nations.

Qatar believes that the process of establishing comprehensive and just peace in the region is the only strategic option and that the decision of the Israeli Government to open a tunnel adjacent to Al-Aqsa Al-Sharif is a violation and desecration of sacred Islamic sites and a provocation of Arabs and Muslims all over the world. It runs counter to the peace process, is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and threatens to freeze the peace process and return the region to tension and violence.

From this rostrum, we call upon the co-sponsors of the peace process and the international community to put a speedy end to Israeli actions against the Palestinians in the occupied territories in order to safeguard the rights of the Palestinian people. We furthermore call upon all parties to continue negotiations and implement all the provisions of the agreements reached so far. We look forward to a successful conclusion of the Washington meeting and to tangible measures that would lead to the permanent closing of the tunnel and the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian areas.

The Middle East region and the whole world have suffered greatly from terrorism. We condemn terrorism in all its forms and have always supported international efforts to deal with this phenomenon. We are committed to promoting all initiatives to convene an international conference on this problem. Our participation in the Sharm el-Sheikh Conference was yet another testimony to our interest in this issue. However, we would like to reiterate that resisting occupation and aggression should not be stigmatized as terrorism, since it is done in defence of international rights.

We pay tribute to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who have defended their entity and their

honourable ideals of tolerance and justice through more than four years of aggression and genocide. We reiterate our commitment to the unity of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to its sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders. We likewise call upon all parties to completely implement the provisions of the Dayton Agreement and make efforts to bring war criminals to justice.

The State of Qatar welcomes the agreement reached to put an end to the bloodshed in Chechnya, and we hope that the parties concerned will work for the establishment of peace and security in that region.

Developments in the world economy and the new prospects they offer, starting with the signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), require further measures to help fragile economies to develop and to give momentum to the global economy.

It is important therefore to reconsider the issues of the cost of weapons and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, such as preventive diplomacy and the provision of the necessary material and human resources. The costs saved in this manner must be rechannelled to assist developing countries to bolster their economies and raise the living standards of their citizens. Assistance from developed and rich countries should be used to combat poverty and underdevelopment.

The issues of poverty, underdevelopment and deprivation also threaten the environment. The overpopulation of our world has been a constant threat for many years and can only lead to a deterioration of the environment and to the spread of poverty in many countries of the world. Huge resources are squandered on non-essentials that cannot help to bridge the gap between rich and poor countries. The situation is getting more serious every day, and we should all be aware that a solution to these problems requires a reconsideration of the squandering of these resources in ways that do not alleviate human suffering or even meet human needs in poor countries all over the world. Developed countries and international organizations should bear the responsibility in finding the proper solutions to these problems to raise the standard of living of poor peoples. The new world order should not add to suffering and poverty in poor countries.

We reaffirm our confidence in the United Nations and our support for this unique international institution that bears the responsibility of dealing with grave humanitarian, social, economic and political problems and that attempts to find effective solutions to these problems in accordance with the high ideals contained in the Charter for the establishment of a peaceful, secure and prosperous world in which cooperation should prevail.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, His Excellency Mr. Álvaro Ramos.

Mr. Ramos (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Perhaps the term "globalization", which occurs so frequently in so many decisions nowadays, best describes the international system which prevails in the present decade and which, under the influence of a growing and close interdependence, will extend into the twenty-first century. Admittedly, the term is not a precise one that sums up the broad and complex range of supranational phenomena that have been emerging since 1989, the year that symbolizes the end of the cold war.

It is undoubtedly a term that is indicative of the fact that today the cause-and-effect relationship in the economic, political and even the cultural sphere transcends traditional national borders more than ever. Interdependence is today more pronounced than ever before in history: markets, capital flows, research and production do not coincide with the political map. The industrial assembly lines of advanced technology ignore national borders, often making it difficult to determine the origin of a finished product, since its components come from such diverse sources. The political boundaries of States are no longer boundaries of economic production and processes. The network of multinational corporations has expanded to the extent that transactions between their subsidiaries account for one quarter of world trade. In the face of the fluctuation and volatility of international electronic transactions, the central banks of the most developed countries already have difficulty controlling the exchange rates of their currencies or the level of interest rates. The recent establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) is seen as the institutional culmination of this global trend towards liberalization of trade in goods and services and as a force conducive to interdependence.

Accordingly, globalization, despite the various rates at which it operates in different parts of the world — from the slow, deliberate pace at which it proceeds in countries with agrarian economies to the dizzying rapidity of its progress in those possessing advanced technologies — appears to be the distinguishing mark of

the post-cold-war era. This phenomenon increasingly lends itself to the dominance of a system of echoes and reflections between nations, of all manner of interrelationships, which in theory should contribute to international stability, since according to classical doctrine, the risks of military confrontation are reduced when nations become more interdependent economically and financially. Nevertheless, recent events have revealed the contrary: new sources of tension and conflict have emerged on the international scene, as well as new unconventional forms of violence and crime that affect world peace and destabilize coexistence within and between democratic societies.

In this setting of globalization and interdependence, the United Nations — with its universal composition, its agglutinative structure that brings together countries at the most varied levels of human development and ethnic or religious composition, its institutional capacity to act as a point of articulation or a sounding board for all concerns or aspirations that extend beyond the local, national or regional level — would be in an ideal position to play a leading and decisive role. In other words, this Organization is the forum that, by the nature and magnitude of its missions, should embody or interpret more faithfully than any other institution these compelling, topical phenomena of globalization and interdependence.

Yet, this distinctive role of the United Nations remains an unrealized vision. It must be asked, then, whether the United Nations, an organic manifestation of the global system that has taken shape in this decade, is capable of effective, systematic action in preventive diplomacy. We would take it one step further and ask what our own national responsibility is, as a democratic State and a founding Member of the United Nations, in strengthening its role in the face of new challenges.

Although this may appear simplistic, it is possible to conceive of war as a consequence of poverty, injustice, overpopulation or poverty. But if these conditions have to be eliminated before peace is feasible, then preventing or restricting hostile tensions becomes a Utopian exercise. For this reason, we believe that there is an urgent need to take an up-to-date, modern look at how the United Nations should react and act in response to the new threats to peace, and at what its capacity should be to respond to the phenomena inherent in the recent or current forms of globalization.

On considering these questions, we shall certainly come up against an unavoidable obstacle: that of the nation in its traditional form and as the basic unit on which the structure of the United Nations was built. This nation no longer exercises a monopoly over international decisions, and consequently is not the exclusive determinant of their legitimacy. To some extent, this phenomenon may be similar to that described as the emergence of the imprecise State, found in a wide variety of non-State political bodies or agents that have an international impact through the intricate network of non-governmental organizations and multinational political movements whose proliferation is another sign of the new interdependence, and which play an increasingly active role in the management of the world system.

Undoubtedly, Governments, as the executives of the political decisions of States, retain their essential powers in matters of diplomacy, security, defence, macroeconomics and currency. Obviously, the United Nations, sustained by the will of Governments, has acted and continues to act as a summarizer or synthesizer of those various wills, without prejudice to the greater or lesser influence of the military or financial powers of its Member States. For this reason, quite naturally, the activity or inactivity of the Organization depends on the concerns or indifference of national Governments, or on the way in which those Governments articulate their consensus or disagreement. But other actors have also taken the international stage, and they are not always a part of the multiplicity of non-governmental organizations. There are also ethnic groups not assimilated into an externally imposed nationality, so-called region-States, with growing links to the world economy and decreasing links to national authorities, as well as religious movements that transcend frontiers and inflame fanaticism which, in some cases, has terrorist effects.

We therefore see a dual and contradictory process: globalization and fragmentation. On the one hand, interdependence has given rise to an increasingly interlinked world in which entities influence each other mutually, and this in theory would be conducive to the strengthening of political units and the formation of mega-States or large regional blocs. On the other hand, and as a consequence of the progressive impact of these new actors on the international scene, fragmentation has also emerged. Since its establishment, the United Nations has seen the number of Member States increase almost fivefold, and at present, approximately one third of these countries has been significantly affected by insurgent or dissident movements or Governments in exile.

For all of these reasons, which are associated with this dialectical process of globalization and fragmentation,

with the growing international importance of a heterogeneous collection of new actors and with the emergence of non-conventional threats to peace that cannot be reconciled through traditional mechanisms of collective security, we need to rethink our Organization and to act in consequence.

The restructuring of the United Nations is certainly not a new issue. On its thirtieth, fortieth and fiftieth anniversaries, efforts at revision, or rather at reform, emerged, aimed at achieving greater efficiency in the pursuit of its purposes. Unfortunately, however, the effort currently under way, like its predecessors, does not go to the root of the problem, which lies far deeper than the pursuit of administrative efficiency or the rationalization of functions. If we evaluate the current efforts to restructure the United Nations, we see clearly that in practice virtually all of the reforms being studied have no more than a procedural or formal impact, and do not make a decisive contribution to strengthening the system, or at least its substance, especially if we bear in mind that this Organization exists at a period in history characterized most distinctly by an accelerated pace of change.

Uruguay fully and spontaneously agrees with the widespread aspiration for change. Like the vast majority of States represented here, our country feels a deep-seated, natural inclination in favour of any means or instrument that, at the global or regional level, prompts or compels nations to conduct themselves in accordance with law. For countries such as ours, which are founded on the rule of international law, it is essential to support any effort to guarantee the legal order, the principles of law, and the rule of law in relations among States. This is not simply a rhetorical reaffirmation of our desire for peace or our conviction that international law must prevail.

Uruguay truly takes the principles of the Charter and the purposes of this Organization as its own, from the maintenance of peace and security — reflected in the fact that our country contributes the largest number of troops per capita to international peacekeeping operations — to the recognition of the primacy of international law — reflected in our being the first country to unconditionally accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. Our position with regard to the United Nations is thus consistent with our historical definition of ourselves as a nation, a definition anchored in respect for international commitments and strict compliance with the principles of international law in all areas in which States bear responsibility.

With reference to the agenda for the present session, and without prejudice to the statements the delegation of Uruguay will be making in the various bodies of the Assembly, we believe it appropriate to make a few brief comments on some items of particular interest.

It is clear that the reform of the Security Council has captured the attention of the international community, precisely because of the post-cold-war changes I have mentioned. The potential impact of the Council on the evaluation, prevention or easing of international conflicts, and the effective application of the principle of legal equality among States make it necessary to have greater democratization or transparency in the decision-making process and more equitable geographical distribution in the composition of the Council.

Uruguay has already expressed its support for increasing the number of permanent members on the Council in the light of present-day world realities, but the number of non-permanent members should also be increased, precisely because of the need for greater transparency and greater representativeness. While many proposals for change have been put forward, we should at the very least all agree that the Council's future composition should be designed so that the quest for more representativeness does not adversely affect the Council's operational efficiency.

With regard to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, and despite the various obstacles that continue to hamper the consolidation of a broad and stable peace, it is essential that the international community maintain its support for the peace process initiated in Madrid in 1991. In the same spirit, it should continue to encourage direct talks between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the Arab countries — as is occurring even today in the United States — with a view to achieving mutual recognition and the ultimate objective of a lasting peace throughout the Middle East. We are confident that the talks taking place in Washington will culminate in the success to which we all aspire, and to which they seem to be leading.

In another context, integration processes are indispensable for fair competition in a world of subregional blocks. In this regard, the countries of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) are convinced that our integration process contributes to a true liberalization of trade. MERCOSUR constitutes an integrated, open process that has created economic zones both inside and outside the subregion. Thus, impetus has

been given to association with other States of the hemisphere, with other regional blocs and with countries outside the region. But above all, MERCOSUR has generated trade, both inside and outside the organization. MERCOSUR is today a demonstration of open regionalism, which affirms the commitments and, above all, the teachings of the World Trade Organization.

There is no question that free trade has been and remains one of the cornerstones of world economic development, as was repeatedly recognized during the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). For this very reason, we cannot endorse unilateral efforts to effect the extraterritorial application of domestic legislation and as a consequence of which, whether by virtue of their letter or their spirit, a country would be able to extend the applicability of its laws beyond its own national borders, undermining not only the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States but also freedom of trade, which is the very essence of the World Trade Organization, recently established by the international community.

While our hopes for the establishment of representative democracy throughout our continent remain as strong as ever, we continue to oppose the unilateral application of economic, trade or financial measures against a State for political purposes. The usefulness of such measures for the rapid and peaceful transition of a country towards democracy has not yet been demonstrated.

With regard to cooperation for development, we recall that the countries with greater capacities to contribute undertook to allocate at least 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product for that purpose. Yet there has been a significant downward trend in contributions stemming from that commitment in recent years, and this trend cannot be linked to the financial crisis the Organization is experiencing. These are resources intended to fight poverty and underdevelopment and to create more dignified living conditions for our peoples. Nor should we confine cooperation to a vertical, one-way process; rather, we must also view it in terms of South-South cooperation, availing ourselves of our mutual experience to create our own competitive advantages.

A few days ago, Uruguay became one of the first signatories to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Together with other developments, such as the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, this Treaty constitutes a basic instrument for the reaffirmation of the principles of international peace and security.

Still in the field of disarmament, we have repeatedly voiced our opposition to the transfer, stockpiling, export and production of anti-personnel landmines. Accordingly, we shall continue to support keenly all initiatives aimed at eliminating them, as well as at securing the immediate entry into force of the Protocol adopted in Vienna last May. Uruguayan contingents assigned to peacekeeping Missions in Angola, Mozambique and Western Sahara have been among the many victims of these weapons, and it is the moral obligation of humankind to eradicate them.

Finally, we should like to close by referring to one of the clearest and most tangible manifestations of the phenomenon of globalization we have sought to describe: the production, trafficking and consumption of illegal drugs. This is one of the most tragic forms of international organized crime, and its growing seriousness is demonstrated by statistics from the most varied sources. Its transnational nature makes it essential that the principle of shared responsibility should be systematically applied — without exception or unilateralism — to the entire cycle of production, trafficking and consumption. This is a tightly wound chain whose links include all countries without exception.

Please accept, Mr. President, our sincerest congratulations on your election to guide the work of the Assembly and the firmest commitment of the Government of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay to support you in your activities.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana, His Excellency Mr. Clement Rohee.

Mr. Rohee (Guyana): As the United Nations faces the beginning of its second half-century and the dawn of a new millennium, we look to the Organization for the continuing fulfilment of the high purposes of its Charter: the maintenance of international peace and security and the achievement of international cooperation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character.

The experience of the past 50 years has shown that these goals are not easily attained. The end of the cold war has not meant an end to conflicts. The world has now entered a new era in which civil strife has replaced super-power rivalry as the main threat to peace and security.

We have yet to find workable solutions to many situations in which conflict continues to prevail. At the same time, the vast majority of mankind remains prey to poverty, hunger and disease. Such inhumane conditions serve as a fertile breeding ground for chronic economic and social degradation.

You, Mr. President, face the enormous task of guiding us through this vast thicket of concerns. We are confident, however, that your well-known diplomatic experience and skills will lead us to new paths in the search for satisfactory solutions. As a son of Malaysia, a country which has long championed the cause of peace and development, you will undoubtedly bring to bear a sense of urgency to the discharge of the many responsibilities with which you will be entrusted.

In so doing, you will build upon the efforts of your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, who spearheaded our thrust to reform and restructure the world Organization in order to make it more responsive to our needs in the post-cold-war era. He is deserving of our gratitude for his labour during the past year.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for providing dynamic leadership to the Secretariat in these challenging times.

The special commemorative meeting held last year to mark our Organization's fiftieth anniversary provided an excellent opportunity not only for reflection on its past achievements, but also on its future direction. There was no dearth of ideas and proposals for strengthening the United Nations in order to help it face the challenges of the twenty-first century. It may be useful for us to look closer at some of those suggestions to determine their feasibility for implementation. It is an exercise in which some of our main Committees, our several working groups and the Secretariat may profitably engage so that the thinking of our Heads of State and Governments does not fall by the wayside, unheeded and forgotten.

My own President, on that historic occasion, presented his concept of a new global human order in which the nations of the world could come together in a creative partnership for progress. This concept of partnership is predicated on the belief that we all now live in an interdependent world, in which, unless we learn to hang together, we will certainly hang separately.

No one nation, no matter how militarily and economically powerful, can hope adequately to address the many complex cross-boundary problems which it now faces. States Members of the United Nations need to come together urgently to see how they can enhance cooperation in the various areas specified by the United Nations Charter.

Among the immediate imperatives would be the creation of a partnership for peace, for, although the world has been mercifully spared another world war since 1945, it has witnessed a number of conflicts, both old and new, which continue to proliferate and to sap our collective strength. The causes of these eruptions are often deep-seated and not easily eradicated. They require careful study and attempts at resolution. Invariably, this will mean that the United Nations will have to go beyond traditional peacemaking and peacekeeping to the increased practice of preventive diplomacy aimed at pacifying potential conflict situations. The experience of past operations, both successes and failures, should be distilled with a view to garnering those lessons which may be of guidance in future cases. In this context, classical approaches to conflict resolution may have to be supplemented by new and imaginative ideas.

Over the past few years, we have together made a laudable effort to enhance the Security Council's capacity to deal with threats to international peace and security. To our credit, we have been somewhat successful in making the Council's operations more transparent to the public eye. We have yet to decide, however, on the major aspects of resolution 48/26 on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Ideas abound on ways and means of achieving these aims. Our challenge is to reconcile these so that a consensus can be reached on reform. My delegation believes that the various proposals now on the table, such as those made by Belize, Italy and Malaysia, need to be further examined to determine both their political acceptability and feasibility. It is possible that, under the right circumstances and with the necessary political will, a reformed and more representative Council will emerge.

A more democratic Security Council will command the respect and enjoy the confidence of United Nations Member States. In time, they may be persuaded to rely less on their own costly defence forces and more on the collective security system provided by the Organization. As specified by the Charter, the various organs and

agencies such as the Assembly, the Council itself, the International Court of Justice, the Secretariat and — under Chapter VIII — regional arrangements, can combine to form an effective bulwark against breaches of peace. During the cold war, some of these organs were precluded from performing their several functions. We must now seek to endow them with the machinery needed for their full operation.

At the same time, we need to strengthen the partnership against the proliferation of all lethal weapons, nuclear and conventional alike. Following the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we have the opportunity now to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty which, while admittedly less than satisfactory, nevertheless offers a chance to proscribe the further development of dangerous weapons.

Although considered less worrisome than their nuclear counterparts, conventional weapons are no less destructive of human life and property. With the ending of the East-West arms race, these weapons are being diverted by producer States to developing countries, where they fuel tensions and eventual conflict. These dangerous transfers must be closely monitored and a serious attempt made to convert the arms industry to development purposes. It is time that we see a dividend from our investment in peace.

In eschewing the use of arms, we must seek to promote dialogue, negotiation and development to remove the root causes of all disputes and conflicts. The persistent eruption of violence in the Middle East demonstrates that, unless respect is shown for the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, peace will continue to elude that troubled region. The peace process cannot, therefore, be allowed to die since without it there is little prospect of reconciliation among belligerents. Similarly, in the Korean peninsula and, indeed, in all areas where divisions among peoples exist, we must use our best diplomatic and political efforts to reduce tensions and encourage peaceful reunification.

Our security concerns have widened in the post-cold-war era to other areas, such as the environment and drug-trafficking. As a small State and member of the Commission on Sustainable Development, Guyana looks forward to the review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is due to take place in 1997. That meeting will provide us with an opportunity to assess the progress made towards implementing the commitments assumed both at Rio and Bridgetown.

With regard to our efforts to combat drug-trafficking and abuse, we were pleased to participate in the high-level debate in the Economic and Social Council last June. We urge further international action on the measures agreed upon and also on the early establishment of an international criminal court which, in our view, will serve as an effective deterrent to drug-related crimes and to other violations against humanity.

Having participated in the various summit conferences which have been held on the environment and development, population and development, human settlements, women and children and social development, my Government is also anxious to see these agreements fully implemented. We also look to the upcoming World Food Summit in Rome to build upon these existing commitments. Eliminating hunger and guaranteeing food security to all the world's people are urgent imperatives for the international community.

As a country which has suffered from the deleterious effects of colonialism, Guyana stands in solidarity with all States that now face the formidable challenge of development. We were thus pleased to participate in the recent mid-term review of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The results of that review gave reasons to hope that the African predicament can be overcome through a much-strengthened cooperation between African countries and the international community. We wish at this time to call on all States to intensify their efforts to support Africa's initiatives to promote its development, for the success or failure of the African Agenda will be the success or failure of us all.

These issues are at the heart of the wider and comprehensive Agenda for Development which we are in the process of elaborating. The endeavour we have made this past year to complete our negotiations on the content of this important document, while significant, points to the inevitable conclusion that we have yet to find the level of political will needed for meaningful agreement. We seem to be stuck in the confrontational mode set during our previous years of dialogue. My delegation is nonetheless of the view that, given the growing interdependence of Member States and the globalization of the world economy and society generally, there are now sufficient elements to form the basis of a global partnership for peace and development.

The terms of this partnership could be drawn up by mutual agreement of the parties, specifying both the

obligations and the rights of each side. On the part of the developing countries, there would be acceptance of their primary responsibility for their development as well as the need for good governance. The developed nations, on the other hand, would commit themselves to supporting these endogenous efforts and to assisting in the creation of an international economic environment that would be propitious to success.

Like the Lomé partnership that has existed for some time now between a large group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States and countries of the European Union, such an arrangement would provide a fair degree of predictability in its operations. Developed and developing countries alike would have the assurances of joint performance and common benefit. Eventually, this partnership would form the basis of a new and enlightened world order to which we have all aspired for many years.

My President, Mr. Cheddi Jagan and the Government and people of Guyana are dedicated to the creation of this new global partnership. We were pleased to note that several international conferences — including the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at Midrand, South Africa, and the meeting of the Group of Seven in Lyon, France — have fully subscribed to the concept. We are therefore encouraged to think that the time has come for the establishment of a new global human order that would be based on respect for national sovereignty, participatory democracy, socio-economic equality, people-centred development and the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We know that such an order or partnership — call it what you will — will not be easy to create and will require the adoption of a fundamentally new development paradigm which will bring together all actors, governmental and non-governmental alike, as well as multilateral and regional institutions, to work together for economic and social progress.

At a symposium which was hosted in August 1996 by the Government of Guyana, ample consideration was given to ways and means of promoting this new order. In light of the changed political, economic and social circumstances of the world today, the conference agreed *inter alia*, that, since the enormous debt burden continued to inhibit development, serious consideration should be given to the cancellation of the debt of the least developed countries; a significant reduction in multilateral debt; and a reduction of the remaining debt stock to sustainable levels for the other developing countries, with debt-service payments limited to 10 per cent of exports, provided that 50 per cent of the savings are used for social sector development. There should also be a significant increase in transfers of long-term development finance to developing countries by, first, attaining the existing official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product by mobilizing new and additional sources of finance; secondly, creating a global fund by mobilizing resources using new and innovative measures, such as the Tobin tax and environment-related levies from which Governments in both the North and the South would benefit; and, thirdly, introducing measures to stabilize the international monetary system and financial markets.

In our efforts to promote the concept of the new global human order, we believe that serious consideration should also be given to the establishment of a fair and equitable trading system, including the provision of reliable access to the markets of the North. Such a system should take into account the special needs of small developing States; ensure fair and stable commodity prices; secure a renegotiation of the provisions of the World Trade Organization, especially with respect to trade and environment, intellectual property rights and foreign direct investments; a reduction and relaxation of conditions attached to future financial transfers; a new emphasis on the expansion of production and growth for sustainable development and a safe physical environment in the south; the development of the social sector as a focus of any new programme with emphasis on education, human resources, health and the development needs of women, children and indigenous peoples; and the enhancement of efforts to democratize and strengthen the United Nations and to restructure other multilateral financial institutions to respond more effectively to the challenge of people-centred development.

In this regard, we must quickly resolve the financial crisis in which the Organization finds itself. Member States, particularly the developed countries, must honour their payment obligations so that the funding of all United Nations activities may be placed on a sound and predictable basis.

These are some of the measures which my Government believes need to be taken urgently by the international community in order to promote global peace and security. Admittedly, some, if not all, may seem in the eyes of many to be too bold and far- reaching. Yet, if they are not implemented soon, we run the grave risk of jeopardizing the future of generations to come. We have the moral imperative to act swiftly to prevent the further decline of our peoples and, indeed, of our entire

civilization. Let us therefore resolve to make this fifty-first session of the General Assembly a decisive turning point in the life of the Organization and an opportunity for forging a just and enlightened partnership among the peoples of the world.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau and of the Guinean Communities, His Excellency Mr. Fernando Delfim da Silva.

Mr. Da Silva (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation*): I wish to congratulate the President warmly on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly and to reiterate our trust in his qualities and skills, which will help in conducting the work of this session. I assure him that the delegation of Guinea- Bissau is ready and willing to help him.

We would also like to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for the devotion and constructive spirit with which he carried out his duties.

We take this opportunity to underscore our appreciation to and reiterate our confidence in the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose initiative and personal involvement in the reform of the United Nations system have made satisfactory results possible.

Last year, over 185 States met in New York City to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This historic event was an excellent opportunity for the United Nations to evaluate and assess the state of our Organization in a changing world and to cast a glance forward into the future.

Today, as yesterday, a large part of the world's population — which, to date, has experienced neither peace nor security, not to mention social well-being — place their trust in the United Nations, the only institution with a universal mission, capable of promoting international peace and security and developing socio-economic cooperation on a global scale.

The numerous challenges and hopes which the United Nations must respond to today are unprecedented. It is therefore important that we make every effort to restructure and revitalize the Organization, because the United Nations is facing an increasingly complex international situation.

In that connection, we commend the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council for its contribution to overall efforts made on this important and timely question. Guinea-Bissau is of the view that all related proposals of the African Group, and other proposals such as that of Italy, should be given due consideration.

In a world beset by numerous grave conflicts, the United Nations is incontrovertibly, the best forum for achieving the ideals which underpin its irreplaceable role in promoting international peace and security.

However, despite the ongoing efforts of our Organization, peace and stability are still a dream in many parts of the world. Conflicts and fratricidal warfare, and the persistence of various kinds of serious tension among States, have made innocent victims of entire populations, causing loss of human life and provoking massive movements of peoples and refugees. Unfortunately, Africa is the continent most affected by this tragedy. Angola, Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda and Somalia are dramatic examples of Africa's recent history.

My recent visit to Angola — which coincided with my country's presidency of the Security Council — as Special Envoy of the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. João Bernardo Vieira, demonstrated our people's long-standing solidarity with the people of Angola and illustrates our unequivocal will to promote confidence among the parties, which is essential to the success of the peace process.

In that connection, we should like to stress the important role of the United Nations, the Troika and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Blondin Beye, in the establishment of the peace process in Angola. We are convinced that the road we have travelled and the successes achieved to date fully warrant the confidence of the international community and its continued support for the peace process in Angola. Guinea-Bissau hopes that the reasons for the delay of the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol will be overcome.

We deplore the tragedy that is dividing Liberia, a country of our subregion, just as we deplore the ongoing violations of the agreements concluded, which increase the loss of human life and provoke new outbreaks of violence. We are also gravely concerned to note the negative impact of the war in Liberia on the neighbouring countries.

We urge all warring factions to respect the new implementation plan of the Abuja Agreement and of the Liberian National Transitional Government. We also invite them to cooperate fully with the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia and the rest of the international community in the search for a definitive solution to the problem in Liberia.

The situation in the Great Lakes region, particularly the situation prevailing in Burundi, is also of great concern to us. We support the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to avoid a repetition of the Rwandan tragedy in these countries.

As for Western Sahara, we reiterate our support for the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to organize the referendum.

Guinea-Bissau continues to focus special attention on the situation in East Timor which needs a negotiated, peaceful, political approach if a solution is to be found. In this context, we would like to welcome the talks between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the United Nations to find a just solution to this conflict.

On behalf of our Government, I reiterate our firm conviction that the Republic of China on Taiwan should be part of the United Nations on the basis of respect for the principle of universality and for the legal equality of States.

The fundamental rights of 21 million inhabitants of a territory under the jurisdiction of a legal Government whose President has been democratically elected provide the political and legal basis for the recognition of their right to international status as a sovereign State under the legal and judicial terms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The reunification of China is a question that must be resolved by the people of China itself. However, the Republic of China on Taiwan is legally entitled to enjoy international status before reunification — in other words, its recognition as a State and application of the principle of parallel representation of divided States.

It is essential that the Middle East peace process be supported. We consider that any lasting solution to the Middle East conflict must respect the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State, and must respect the independence and territorial integrity of all States of the region, including the State of Israel, and their right to live in security within internationally recognized boundaries. The tragic events of recent days have weakened the peace process while seriously affecting world public opinion. We urge the State of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to persevere on the path of dialogue towards the restoration of a climate of trust, which is vital for the establishment of lasting peace. We welcome the meeting between President Arafat and Prime Minister Netanyahu, which is an important step on that path. We commend all parties that are contributing to the restoration of the Israel-Palestinian dialogue, especially the Government of the United States of America.

The holding of elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a positive element in the resolution of this crisis in Europe. We hope that all the parties concerned will henceforth devote all their energies to the reconstruction of that devastated country, to ensure a future of peace, tolerance and development.

The embargo against Cuba, whose repercussions gravely affect the people of that country, must be resolved through dialogue and negotiation by the parties concerned, with a view to achieving a complete and satisfactory solution.

Poverty, malnutrition, hunger and major endemic diseases are a painful reality that affects a large part of the population of developing countries. We welcome the convening at Rome next November of the World Food Summit, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Guinea-Bissau is convinced that international security and stability depend on the collective struggle against all the internal and external factors that force a large part of the world's population to live in abject poverty. Indeed, the persistence of poverty throughout the world requires an ongoing sustained effort on the part of the community of nations and calls for a global approach to resolve the major socio-economic problems affecting the world.

The debt burden and debt-servicing gravely jeopardize development in Africa. During recent years, as was clearly demonstrated by the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, our countries have become net exporters of capital because of the financial agreements they must honour. Indeed, the amounts allocated to debt-servicing greatly exceed external resource flows. Guinea-

Bissau is no exception. Overall, third world economies have seen little improvement.

The gap between developed and developing countries continues to grow because of the slow rate of economic growth in the developing countries in general and the least-developed countries in particular.We welcome the action undertaken by the United Nations, especially the System-wide Special Initiative for Africa. My Government continues to devote considerable efforts to the economic recovery of our country, strictly applying the structural adjustment programme agreed with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. However, efforts to restore our country's macroeconomic balance and the well-being of our people should be supplemented by additional support from the international community, which we hope will continue to be forthcoming in support of our efforts in that direction.

Guinea-Bissau, an African country and a member of the Portuguese-speaking community, welcomes Portugal's initiative to propose to its European Union partners the convening of a European-African summit, whose objective would be to promote a political dialogue aimed at laying a new foundation for a new global partnership.

Environmental protection and the rational utilization of our planet's natural resources are the responsibility of all humanity. Aware of this reality, Guinea-Bissau has designed with its cooperation partners a strategy for sustainable development that respects environmental balance and which can be considered socially viable and just. In that context, our Government is making considerable efforts to implement the recommendations of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, the Platform of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing, and the recommendations of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Istanbul.

Respect for and the full exercise of basic human rights are elements of freedom, peace and international stability. Guinea-Bissau, a democratic country, is resolved to preserve intrinsic human values, for harmonious and integrated development. The United Nations is intended to be the appropriate forum for finding concerted comprehensive solutions to the major challenges facing the world today. That is why it is vital to increase its ability to prevent conflicts and preserve peace and to promote socio-economic development. Today Guinea-Bissau, more than ever before, is determined to contribute to the achievement of the ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Miguel Angel Burelli Rivas.

Mr. Burelli Rivas (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like first of all to congratulate Ambassador Razali on his election to the presidency of the Assembly and to wish him every success in his work.

It would seem that after half a century, the debate on the meaning, importance, role and timeliness of this Organization has become increasingly impassioned. It could be said that the United Nations is on trial.

It may be that some of the criticism is justified. It is accused, for instance, of having a large bureaucracy, and it is said that there is a proliferation of situations requiring the deployment of military forces to pave the path for peace, which is also a path riddled with war. These situations came about without the consent of the Member States, who must all bear their share of the costs. This enlarged bureaucracy, added to the expenses of military peacekeeping, increases the financial burden of the weaker countries. Yet, it seems to be the strong countries that most resent and denounce this burden.

Nevertheless, to thoroughly assess and evaluate what the United Nations is and what it represents, we would have to compare it to another such organization of its kind, one that had brought together nearly 200 sovereign States, led them by the hand through 50 of the most enigmatic and dangerous years of history and remained a point of reference when all the ideological references had collapsed. And that other organization has never existed.

As far as we know, humanity has never lived through 50 continuous years of peace, yet 51 years have passed without a tremor of generalized conflict like the ones that once seemed to be cyclical. Even though misunderstandings and aggressions appear on one continent or another, based on deep-seated racial, religious or political hatred, and leading to genocide or local wars, we cannot speak of a conflagration, especially when the will of the people of all regions rises above these wars, committed to the restoration of peace.

The international community, in varying degrees, has started to review its greatest Organization, and it has focused its attention first on the Security Council. Fortunately, the creative imagination of States has suggested various ways to change it in order to make it more representative of the new world realities and, of

course, to make it more efficient. My country follows this process with enormous interest, aware that the Security Council will be the centre of balance of the world system.

In the meantime, this long period of relative peace has allowed for the rise of European integration, which is perhaps the greatest political achievement of our century. It has made possible the growth of daring and vigorous technological civilizations in Asian countries as well as understanding and growth in the Latin American region, which today has become, thanks to this understanding, humankind's most promising abode. In this framework, Venezuela has broadened its ties with and deepened its commitments to the great causes of our time, such as the enforcement of human rights, truly representative democracy, integration as an economic and political culture of our modern era and disarmament as a guarantee of world security. Tomorrow, on behalf of my country I shall proudly sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

My country hopes that the criticism levelled at the Organization will justify itself by leading to logical plans to reform and revitalize it. Its success must be definitively established in the implementation of human rights, in the fight against terrorism and in the alliance to exterminate drug trafficking and connected activities. A special session of the General Assembly has been called on this latter topic at Mexico's urging.

In his current report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General refers to the territorial controversy between Venezuela and Guyana. I must note that this controversy lies within the framework of the 1966 Geneva agreement signed by both countries in order to reach a practical and lasting solution to this dispute. In a spirit of dialogue and cooperation between the two parties, we appealed to the Secretary-General's good offices and are now applying one of the mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes provided for in the United Nations Charter. We are therefore surprised that this case is expressly mentioned in the chapter on conflict situations.

As a Latin American, I must recognize that, thanks to this lasting peace, my region, a scion of Europe, and its creature in many respects, has resumed friendly relations with its natural metropolis after 80 years of world wars that had separated us and created a rift in the cultural patterns that had governed us for centuries.

Of course, numerous threats linger on. The so-called weapon-States that have the financial resources to spark a regional conflict that can multiply and spread are still there, untouched by democratic norms and mostly driven by fanaticism. In countries where no one would have imagined it, the danger of racial discrimination returns like a nightmare. At the very centre of the most cultured continent, we have witnessed a war and a genocide that we would angrily condemn in Cambodia or in Rwanda, and among countries that have been an world example of tolerance and coexistence for centuries. The followers of two religions that are virtually the same confront and exterminate one another almost daily.

At the same time, the conditions of exchanges, the goals of good policies and the miracle of modern communications lead to a free flow of trade, technology, scientific models and human movement, both through tourism and through commercial interests. All this is bringing humanity together as a whole, using information to express an impassioned interest that is beginning to be widely known as globalization.

The Organization still has to overcome the prophecies and schemes of pessimistic traditions, according to which natural law dictates the existence of wars, diseases and other disasters as a fateful necessity to regulate population growth and as an incentive to devise technologies and scientific developments in the escalation that Malthusians see in their observation of nature.

Peace is the primary purpose of the United Nations; war is the recourse most commonly used by humanity to try to solve imbalances and resentments. And we have peace, ceaselessly troubled but always re-established as far as and wherever possible. But we must remember that war is the most chronic of recidivists, since greed and ambition feed on it.

We might say that what this Organization needs to solve universal strife, poverty and untrammelled population growth is a human resource development and systematic education project to do away with the fragile ethics of our time and to teach all nations the art of living — and living together. Fears, suspicions and animosities are engendered by ignorance among people and nations.

I speak on behalf of a country whose most important natural resource has endowed it with power and economic euphoria on the one hand, and plunged it into acute psychological depression on the other. That resource is oil, of which we hold the largest and most secure reserves in the Western world. Since oil legally belongs to the State, as do all underground resources, the State finds it,

processes it, sells it and distributes its revenues as services. Little by little, the old agricultural country became used to stretching out a hand to receive from the State gifts of protectionism, subsidies, scholarships, credits and even undue largesse, all of which used to come from the land as a reward for labour.

For more than two generations Venezuelans relied exclusively on oil, disregarding personal effort. At times, the State demagogically encouraged this dependency and promoted idleness, thus leading to ethical complications born of collusion between politics and the economy. This is the deep-seated reason for the so-called Venezuelan crisis. It is different from others because it is not economic but moral, and can only be solved by a return to honest behaviour and personal endeavour, which requires a great deal of time and effort.

This is what the Administration of President Rafael Caldera is striving for. After trying to reverse the enormous evils he inherited, using measures that were not too harmful economically for the weakest sector, on 15 April, he decided to open up the economy and incorporate prevailing market economy values through the Venezuelan Agenda. He was careful, however, to establish a programme to absorb the enormous shock this opening causes transitionally on the majorities accustomed to the old State paternalism. After a brief period, we are emerging from this unique crisis, which cannot be and could not have been resolved by a simple decree, as other crises, since it required and still requires a change in habits in order for people to learn to be self-sufficient. The case of Venezuela could recur in other countries characterized by State paternalism.

If we look closely at the so-called social crisis that all Latin American countries suffer, we can see it is due to a lack of training. We used to say that education was the universal solution to all problems, and it is. But at a time when Latin American society has become unhinged because of peasant migrations undoing the social and moral order, with the ensuing marginalization brought about by a change in customs leading to the degradation of the family, both education and training are absolute necessities.

The breakdown of the traditional home deprives people of the essential ethical values that used to be learned from the mother. Nowadays, the State must replace the home and the mother, in preparing the inner self of its citizens. It is evident, therefore, that training and education are of primary importance since the human being's inner self must be strengthened in order to rebuild the family unit, which gives coherence, pride and courage to a society. Simón Bolívar, the Liberator of America, grasped the whole problem when he said, "Morality and enlightenment are our first necessities". Perhaps the whole world today suffers the same evil and has the same needs.

The United Nations, through its specialized agencies, is carrying out innumerable programmes, studies, trials and experiments to solve the daily tragedy of our human species. This is becoming more and more complex since the efforts are aimed at an already deformed being, incapable, therefore, of living in harmony with others.

If we were to agree that the chain connecting home, primary school, secondary school, university, and life broke down some time ago, and that it is missing its first link, without which all else is pointless and without foundation, we would invest at the very roots of human life the economic and scientific resources needed to form human beings from the start, enabling them to grow, endowed with the values that would make them citizens.

Latin America, born unaware of racial hatred, religious conflicts and territorial greed, with an indivisible spirit made up of a combination of influences that move in the same direction on the freest and broadest of stages, is hurt by the fact that its real problems today are social ones, brought on by the error of political regimes that ignored the discipline of education or doubted its undeniable primacy.

Democracy has taken root in Latin America as in no other part of the universe as a consequence of political desire. Nevertheless, we are not satisfied, because democracy must mean the eradication of age-old ills and constitute, more than merely a system to elect governments, a cogent civilization.

We aspire to a democracy transparent in its conduct and effective in its achievements to continue offering it as an alternative to the ancient dictatorships. This explains my country's perseverance in attaining an honest and clean democracy. In this regard, we have proposed a convention against corruption, which has been approved at the hemispheric level. Strangely enough, it would be the first of its kind in the world, which goes to show how strongly entrenched this vice is: it has gone unpunished by dictatorships and democracies alike throughout time and around the world.

The day is not distant when this instrument, limited now to our hemisphere, will encompass our whole

Organization, since the crime it prosecutes is not exclusively American but takes root in many countries on all continents. During the last substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, Venezuela, together with Argentina, the United States and other countries, sponsored a United Nations declaration on corruption and bribery in transnational commercial activities, which is clear proof that the fight against unpunished corruption prospers in the world.

If the United Nations, aware that the key to universal change lies in training and education, were to inspire and lead an in-depth study of what makes a human being, of the way societies that break into conflict or serve as models for others are defined by the sum of their members; if the United Nations were to use the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to add a universal teaching component to all its cooperation programmes, then the true ethical and human redemption of society would begin.

Free of prejudice and with sufficient resources, Latin America, a melting pot of customs and races, could serve as a laboratory to show how the human species can straighten its spine of ethics, which has been so twisted in so many places. Our America as a whole is a welcoming place for peace, since there are no elements of unease or insecurity other than social asymmetries — not the asymmetries of blood-lines, but those of dire poverty, born of the incapacity to transform and distribute our plentiful natural resources.

We are living a unique moment in history. In a short time, without violence, we have seen great empires come to an end, the elimination of the cruellest jails of human thought, the liberation of all wills and the opening of the greatest opportunity peoples have ever had to reorganize themselves in accordance with hopes and desires that were long repressed or thwarted by violence of all sorts.

As Marguerite Yourcenar says in her biography of Hadrian, referring to the religious perplexity of the great Emperor: in his lifetime the old gods no longer existed and Christ had not yet arrived. Humanity's present spirit seems to be similar: free, but still dazed and hesitant to adopt a new order from a new mould; but, above all, free, although at this fateful moment great leaders might be lacking.

The United Nations holds and reflects this feeling — hovering between jubilation and disbelief — like a prodigy standing before the panorama of infinite possibilities of what we can create with the fertile dreams of our era.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Koffi Panou, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Togolese Republic.

Mr. Panou (Togo) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, I would like to express to the President my sincere and warm congratulations upon his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. My delegation is convinced that his skills, his perfect mastery of international issues and his unstinting efforts will bring the work of our session to a satisfactory conclusion. In the same context, I would like to assure him of my delegation's readiness to cooperate with him in the discharge of his lofty mission.

It is also a pleasure for me to commend the remarkable work done by his predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, who stamped the fiftieth session with the seal of his effectiveness and dedication. I pay tribute to him on behalf of my delegation.

I would also like to congratulate Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for the noteworthy way in which he has devoted his energies to the achievement of the objectives of our Organization and to enhancing day by day its credibility. He has all the respect of the Togolese delegation.

The economic, political and social context of this session hardly seems to differ from that of previous years: the ongoing conflicts continue to take many victims. Moreover, terrorism continues to have a great impact on the world, and the burden of debt, with all its implications, holds in check the development of many countries, particularly those of Africa. All these phenomena cast a shadow over the international landscape and prompt concerns regarding the genuine advent of peace, security and prosperity, to which all of humanity legitimately aspires.

It is in this context that Togo has endeavoured to consolidate the basis of a state of law and to confront the imperatives of sustainable human development to ensure the social well-being of its people.

Togo has begun the process of democratizing national political life, and the process has had a normal and encouraging development, particularly in the last three years. The calm, orderly and transparent holding of partial legislative elections on 4 and 18 August 1996 illustrates the resolve of the Togolese people, with the impetus of the Head of State, Mr. Gnassingbe Eyadema,

to move forward along the road to democracy, peace and political stability, which guarantee social and economic development.

Having learned the lessons of a difficult democratic transition, which ripped the social fabric and cast into doubt the achievements of its development process, the population of Togo is more aware than ever before of the need to preserve and strengthen its unity. By doing so it will be able to effectively meet present and future challenges, ensure its prosperity and make its modest contribution to the building of a better world. The President of the Republic and the Government of Togo intend to continue to work tirelessly in this direction, in concert with other members of the international community. They are satisfied to note today that the people of Togo, through the hardships that they have endured, have acquired a clear awareness of self-responsibility. Thus, having supported the efforts of their leaders for several months, they more and more firmly reject political formulas and organization approaches designed in other climes that have proved unsuitable in the context of their history and culture. In the view of many observers, the Togolese people, through the countless manifestations of its political will, is cultivating the authentic African democracy that we all desire.

Last year the United Nations commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of its founding. On that occasion, the General Assembly observed in its Declaration:

> "The determination, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war' is as vital today as it was fifty years ago." *(resolution 50/6, first para.)*

The many ethnic or religious armed conflicts that still scar the international landscape confirm this view of the General Assembly and demonstrate the magnitude of the task still facing the Organization.

Africa remains one of the world's regions of tension, and our continent has been sorely tested by cruel conflicts persisting in a number of States. The Government of Togo deplores the fact that conflicts such as those in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Burundi and Angola have not yet been definitively resolved. The huge numbers of victims, refugees, displaced persons and the massive destruction caused by these conflicts should be enough to convince the parties concerned of the need to put an end to their disputes, which could tire the patience and perseverance of the international community in its efforts.

Concerned over the deteriorating situation in these countries, the Togolese Government urges the various actors to seek a peaceful solution to their disputes, through dialogue and cooperation, so that their peoples can at last find the peace and stability necessary for their development.

With respect more specifically to Liberia, my delegation welcomes the bold measures taken by the Committee of Nine of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at its meeting in Abuja last August, aimed at successfully concluding the peace process begun many years ago. These measures, accompanied by sanctions, attest to the determination of the ECOWAS countries to do their utmost to find a definitive and lasting solution to this fratricidal and seemingly endless conflict.

At this new stage of the process, it is important for our Liberian brothers to recognize the tremendous efforts made by the ECOWAS States, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations, and to show good will in order to facilitate the effective implementation of the Abuja Agreement of 19 August 1995, which provides the means to end this conflict and to return to peace and to constitutional normalcy.

With respect to the dispute over the Bakassi peninsula, my country would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General's efforts towards a peaceful settlement. These efforts, which recently took the form of the dispatch of a good-offices mission to Cameroon, Nigeria, Bakassi and Togo, may help strengthen the interim measures aimed at reducing tensions, while waiting for a judgement to be handed down by the International Court of Justice.

Togo is determined to work towards resolving all conflicts by peaceful means and to safeguard peace and security on the African continent. Thus my country and its President are prepared to contribute to the restoration of peace on the peninsula and to the normalization of relations between the two countries. In the same spirit, the Government of Togo hopes that the good will shown by the two parties during the visit of the Secretary-General's good-offices mission will continue to prevail, so that the desired goal may be achieved as soon as possible.

The persistence of these conflicts, which deeply undermine our continent's development efforts, compels me to recall the proposal made at the thirtieth session of the OAU conference of Heads of State and Government

by President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo aimed at establishing an inter-African force charged with keeping the peace wherever it is threatened or breached.

We welcome the various initiatives undertaken to that end to make this idea a reality, so that Africa, with the support of the international community, might better manage conflict situations, which divert the efforts of the African peoples from the priorities of economic and social development.

Along the same lines, given the numerous conflicts the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution will have to face and in light of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, it is important to strengthen the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, headquartered in Togo. To that end, it would be appropriate if the Centre, established pursuant to resolution 40/151 G of 16 December 1985 by the General Assembly at the request of OAU Heads of State and Government, could benefit from adequate and appropriate resources so that it could fully discharge its duties. In that context, I should like to reaffirm that the Government of Togo, which attaches great importance to this Centre, will do its utmost to honour its commitments as the host country.

The 1991 Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East and the Washington agreements of 13 September 1993, *inter alia,* have sparked hopes regarding a negotiated settlement of the question of Palestine and the conflict in the Middle East as a whole. The evacuation of certain occupied territories of Palestine, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the repeal of anti-Israel provisions from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) charter, and the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, are positive occurrences that bear witness to the progress achieved in the context of the Middle East peace process. Togo welcomes this progress.

However, the difficulties that have confronted this process in the last few days, jeopardizing its normal development, are a source of grave concern for my delegation. The delegation of Togo is particularly concerned at the tragic events that took place last week in Jerusalem, which claimed many Palestinian and Israeli victims.

Togo, which endorses Security Council resolution 1073 (1996), adopted on 28 September 1996, calls for greater energy in the continuation of the process until it achieves concrete results. It urges the evacuation of all occupied Arab territories, the existence of Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. At any rate, it is important to achieve a just and comprehensive peace benefiting all countries of the region, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

With respect to the war in the former Yugoslavia, I should like on behalf of the Togolese Government to heartily congratulate the architects of the Dayton Agreement, signed in Paris on 14 December 1995, and to express our appreciation at the acceptable development of the situation in the light of the implementation of that Agreement. We would like to encourage the main actors in that conflict to continue to seek a negotiated settlement aimed at a definitive return to peace and stability in that part of Europe.

Aside from hotbeds of tension, we must note that terrorism, which we condemn, is, because of its pernicious objectives and criminal acts, one of the gravest threats today to international peace and security. We welcome the holding of the Summit for Peacemakers in Sharm el-Sheikh and the recent meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 7 major industrialized countries and of the Russian Federation in Paris. The Government of Togo welcomes the various measures advocated at these two meetings in order to energetically thwart the activities of transnational criminal organizations and their agents.

With respect to the safeguarding of peace through disarmament, Togo reiterates its firm commitment to general and complete disarmament, and supports unreservedly the efforts of the international community to achieve that objective. In this connection, my delegation considers that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), opened for signature by States on 24 September 1996, and which I have just signed on behalf of the Government of Togo, will undoubtedly contribute, if it is accepted and applied by all, to a reduction of the nuclear threat. This would allow the international community to make headway towards the definitive elimination of nuclear weapons, which is one of the most ardent wishes of humanity.

As the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations states:

> "A dynamic, vigorous, free and equitable international economic environment is essential to the well-being of humankind and to

international peace, security and stability." *(resolution 50/6, para. 2)*

This unanimous recognition of the positive effects that a sound international economic climate can have on world stability is absolutely accurate. The growing indifference of a large part of the international community to the search for appropriate solutions to the current economic crisis is becoming increasingly disturbing. Indeed, while in the industrialized countries the overall socio-economic situation is experiencing positive developments and while the disparities in their economic performances are decreasing, we note with regret that the developing countries, particularly in those of Africa, still languish under the debt burden and have great difficulty in extricating themselves from the situation they have been in for several years.

As has been repeatedly pointed out, the solution to the economic problems of the developing countries requires radical and innovative solutions, *inter alia*, the cancellation or appreciable reduction of their debts and the implementation of bold measures aimed at promoting their progress.

My delegation welcomes the efforts made so far by creditors to resolve the debt problem. It appreciates the resolve expressed by the seven major industrialized countries at the G-7 Lyons Summit to take additional action to reduce the debt burden of the poorest countries *vis-à-vis* multilateral institutions and bilateral creditors that are not members of the Paris Club. It welcomes in particular the recent decision of the Ministers for Finance of the seven major industrialized countries, at their meeting in Washington, to alleviate the debt burden of the poorest countries, up to a limit of 80 per cent.

Aside from the question of debt, my delegation is also concerned with other problems of development. Aware that they are primarily responsible for promoting their own development through sound and consistent economic and social policies, the developing countries involved in structural adjustment programmes have made enormous sacrifices, which, unfortunately, have not yet achieved the desired results. Thus most of these countries face serious social problems, including endemic disease, hunger, unemployment, a high number of unemployed graduates, strident claims by its citizens and poverty.

To confront and resolve these various ills in a lasting manner, the international community must show greater solidarity and mobilize, together with these countries, to render them the necessary assistance. Moreover, in order for it to take off economically, Africa must stop being viewed as just a reservoir of raw materials.

At this time of globalization of the economy and the liberalization of markets, it is imperative that African States become competitive in international trade. To this end, they must meet the challenges of industrial development through sustained technical and financial cooperation with the industrialized countries. Moreover, it is important that Africa not become dependent on the exploitation of raw materials, whose prices are constantly deteriorating. The pace of its industrialization must be encouraged to accelerate through international cooperation based on partnership and the support of developed countries, development-related bodies and the relevant multilateral financial institutions.

In that connection, the Government of Togo, which created and continues to strengthen conditions that favour foreign investment in its free zone, *inter alia*, would like to express its gratitude to both its public and private partners and to the industrial development institutions that, through their investments and various forms of assistance, have supported its initiatives in this domain.

The World Food Summit will be held in Rome next November. The Government of Togo hopes that the work of the Summit will meet with success and that the recommendations that will be adopted there will help to improve the food and agricultural situation so that the needs of peoples in this sphere can be met.

Togo welcomes the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, launched on 15 March 1996 by the Secretary-General. We see in this initiative a confirmation of the commitment of the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to give concrete reality to the objectives of the San Francisco Charter in order, *inter alia*, to support development in Africa.

At a time when the economic and social situation of Africa is constantly deteriorating, it is important to duly appreciate this Special Initiative promoting a partnership between political and economic institutions and African Governments. One of the Initiative's good points is that it deals substantively with problems and focuses primarily on action towards peace, political stability and development on the continent. However, in order for it to achieve its objectives, the international community must become effectively involved in its implementation by making a decisive contribution to the mobilization of the necessary financial resources, so that it does not become

simply just another initiative for Africa. My Government will devote the necessary attention to it in order to turn the situation to best account.

In today's world, where nations are confronted with the paradox of fragmentation and globalization, the United Nations, more than ever before, has a key role to play. Thus, in connection with the severe lack of resources that has brought the United Nations to the brink of bankruptcy, my Government is among those which believes that no reform of the Organization can succeed if the Organization has to fight for its own survival. It is therefore urgent that drastic measures be taken to ensure a stable financial base for the Organization and to put a definitive end to this payments crisis, which has paralysed it. The principal States in arrears should show the political will to help resolve the crisis.

In the view of my delegation, improved effectiveness of the United Nations is a must; but it is also important to promote its democratization. We believe, therefore, that the Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council is proceeding in the right direction. Given the present configuration of the United Nations, and as noted by the Working Group, it is necessary to contemplate an equitable and responsible increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Council and to strengthen its links with the main organs of the United Nations and with the Member States, so as to enhance transparency.

For many decades, thanks to the sustained efforts of the United Nations, multilateralism has clearly been the most appropriate framework for resolving problems relating to international peace and security and to development.

The balance sheet drawn up last year, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, was encouraging despite certain shortcomings. Nevertheless, much remains to be done. Greater efforts are required on the part of Member States, as well as greater resources, so that a reformed and revitalized United Nations, better adapted to current realities, can respond effectively to the expectations of humanity as a whole.

In the discharge of the lofty mission assigned to the Organization, Togo, for its part, will associate itself without reservation to any initiative aimed at safeguarding international peace and security and promoting justice, human rights and progress for the benefit of all nations.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf.

Mr. Al-Sahaf (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to begin my statement by congratulating Mr. Razali Ismail on his election to the office of President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

I am quite confident that his extensive experience and competence will definitely contribute to the successful outcome of this session. I should like to assure him that we are keen to cooperate with him and support his efforts to bring the proceedings of this session of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion.

In recent weeks, Iraq has been the focus of worldwide attention and interest because of the American missile attacks to which it has been subjected and the intensive American military build-up that followed in preparation for a large-scale military aggression on the pretext that Iraq violated Security Council resolutions.

I would like here to describe our views on these events. Iraq has acted in no way contrary to the Charter or Security Council resolutions or to justify an American military aggression against it. What Iraq did was to move its forces on its own territories and within its internationally recognized borders at the request of one of the main Iraqi Kurdish factions in order to repel a military aggression committed by another faction in alliance with a neighbouring foreign country. This action of the Iraqi Government falls within the sovereignty of Iraq over its own territories and in the context of its duty to defend its own people and repel any foreign aggression against them. This is a right guaranteed by all international covenants and laws. It is also a basic responsibility of the Government of any country.

The operation was limited, swift and carried out without the loss of human lives. This has been attested to by all observers, including officials of United Nations agencies who were working in northern Iraq. This operation put an end to the state of civil war, in-fighting, chaos and insecurity in northern Iraq and restored peace and stability to that region. The United States, however, tried to exploit these developments and to use them as a pretext to carry out missile attacks against Iraq and destroy a number of civilian installations, leaving many martyrs and wounded civilians in its wake.

The United States Administration was not satisfied with its military aggression against Iraq. The United States President openly announced, on 3 September 1996, his decision to expand the no-fly zone in southern Iraq, which had been imposed by the United States in 1992, from the 32nd parallel to the 33rd parallel. The imposition of no-fly zones in Iraqi airspace is a use of armed force in violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. It was a unilateral decision that had nothing to do with the United Nations nor with Security Council resolutions on Iraq. This fact was confirmed by the official spokesman of the United Nations on 7 January 1993, when he said that the imposition of the no-fly zone in southern Iraq was not based on any Security Council resolution.

The spokesman of the French Foreign Ministry announced on 2 September 1996 that:

> "There is no United Nations or the Security Council provision defining the basis for a no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel or south of the 32nd parallel. The decision to establish these zones is a quadrilateral decision by France, the United States, Britain and Turkey. There is no provision by the United Nations defining these zones."

As the Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations pointed out on 5 September 1996:

> "This no-fly zone, from its inception, was not based on any international legal foundation."

The Arab and world reaction to the aggressive actions of the United States has been one of rejection and condemnation. The whole world now knows that the imposition of the no-fly zones in Iraq is neither legitimate nor legal and constitutes an ongoing aggression against Iraq. It must cease.

From the beginning, Iraq has been very clear in rejecting the so-called no-fly zones unilaterally imposed by America and some of its allies. America and Britain insisted on expanding this no-fly zone and claimed that its aim, as declared by the highest officials in the United States Administration, was to protect United States strategic interests in the region. I wonder: Is a State entitled forcibly to impose such a situation on another independent State, also a United Nations Member, on the pretext of protecting its strategic interests? Such acts would cause the law of the jungle to prevail in international relations over the law of the Charter.

We demand that the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council reject this logic — which is based neither on international legitimacy nor on the authorization of the Security Council itself — and relieve our country of this injustice. None of the allegations and pretexts put forward by the United States to justify its attacks and military build-up against Iraq have any justification in law, fact or legitimacy. They should be deplored and condemned.

I would like here to express the gratitude of the people of Iraq for the Arab and world reaction to this aggression and the acts that followed, which were aimed at violating Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

No one here is unaware of the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the total blockade imposed on them, which has prevented them from satisfying their basic human needs for more than six years. Conditions in Iraq have reached such an extreme that it has become impossible for the United Nations to maintain the silence imposed on it by one party's will, especially when humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies have loudly warned of the serious consequences and harm of continuing the total blockade of Iraq. Infant mortality rates have soared for lack of food and medicine. Disease is rampant. The health, education and environmental sectors have deteriorated. There have also been major effects and regression in other humanitarian fields, in the growth and development of which Iraq had been a pioneer among third-world countries.

However, the United States of America, which has been shedding crocodile tears over the humanitarian conditions of the Iraqi people and their need for food and medicine, stands today publicly and blatantly against the legal, balanced and proper implementation of the memorandum of understanding on the "oil for food" formula arrived at by Iraq and the United Nations Secretariat on 20 May 1995.

While the professional and diplomatic dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations Secretariat managed to reach agreements satisfactory to both sides, the United States tried to put all kinds of hurdles in the way of the negotiations at each phase, with a view to delaying the finalization of the memorandum of understanding. Then it started to set up road blocks, hindering the actual implementation of the memorandum's provisions in the framework of the sanctions committees and in the completion of the administrative arrangements needed for such implementation.

I would like here to provide some statistics to demonstrate the magnitude of the obstacles the United States threw up to the process of drafting the memorandum of understanding. It is well known that it took 50 working meetings to complete the memorandum — 50 working meetings — from 6 February to 20 May 1996. In the course of this process, the United States presented 29 amendments to the provisions of the memorandum agreed upon with the United Nations Secretariat during the negotiations. Although Security Council resolution 986 (1995) provides for accelerated procedures to implement agreements, it took 80 days to establish the said procedures. During this period, 28 informal meetings were held with experts from the French and German missions; there were five formal meetings, at which the procedures were supposed to have been quickly completed and adopted. The United States, however, delayed that adoption for three more weeks. The United States remains to this day the only party blocking the implementation of the memorandum of understanding, and it does so for political reasons that completely contradict its own allegations that the purpose of resolution 986 (1995) is purely humanitarian.

Because of United States pressure and interference, the Secretary-General has so far been unable to implement the memorandum of understanding. This is evidenced by the fact that discussion on the implementation of a six-month plan to provide food and medicine to the Iraqi people has taken seven months. It is not yet complete because of continuous United States interference and derailing of the process to implement this memorandum. We believe that these acts should cease and that the United Nations Secretariat and Iraq should be allowed to implement the memorandum as soon as possible and without further interference.

The Iraqi people want to be able to satisfy their own needs, using their own capabilities and financial means. They seek the lifting of restrictions whose sole aim is to starve them and wound their honour and pride. However, like the people of Iraq, a proud people more than 6,000 years old that has given birth to human civilizations, will not kneel before any threat nor surrender its sovereignty and pride to those whose only aim is hegemony over the wealth of peoples and things sacred to them. Iraq is only demanding its right — guaranteed by all international covenants and customs and Security Council resolutions — since all the obligations imposed on Iraq have been carried out and all the reasons for the imposition of these unjust sanctions have been removed.

Iraq has fulfilled all its obligations under Security Council resolutions in spite of the injustice they involved. While these same resolutions place corresponding obligations on the Security Council, we have seen no movement by the Council to meet them. We feel, rather, that the Council has abdicated its powers of control and monitoring of the implementation of its resolutions. It assigned that task to the Special Commission (UNSCOM), which it entrusted with the implementation of section C of resolution 687 (1991) and gave sole responsibility to decide whether Iraq has carried out all its obligations and deserves to have the sanctions lifted.

UNSCOM has been working throughout Iraq for nearly six years. It has sent 373 inspection teams, comprising a total of 3,754 international inspectors, in addition to its established staff located in Baghdad, which is made up of more than 90 officials. The Commission uses the most up-to-date scientific and technological means and methods, which should have enabled it to accomplish its mission and verify the results of its work. Is it conceivable that this Commission has been unable to accomplish its mission to date? Would anybody ask the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM what has been accomplished and what remains to be done? Is it conceivable that UNSCOM has not yet been able to destroy the weapons of mass destruction once owned by Iraq? What has this huge army of inspectors been doing all this time? They did not come to Iraq for a vacation. Is it true that the documents and equipment which the Commission alleges to remain but has been unable to find constitute a threat to international peace and security and require the withholding of its recommendation that the sanctions against Iraq be lifted, even partially?

Iraq has fulfilled all its substantive obligations with regard to the implementation of section C of resolution 687 (1991) on the elimination of prohibited weapons. I would like to reaffirm from this rostrum, on behalf of my Government, that Iraq has retained no prohibited weapons, components of such weapons or documents related thereto. What UNSCOM has been saying about Iraq's concealment of prohibited weapons, components of such weapons or documents related thereto is based on mere suspicion unsupported by material evidence. Those suspicions emanate from American and British intelligence services and their agents.

Iraq has asked UNSCOM to address these suspicions in a practical, objective and apolitical manner. UNSCOM is not a political body to be influenced by the political goals of any one country. It is, rather, a technical

Commission obliged to carry out its tasks in a technical and scientific manner free from political conflicts and antagonistic positions. We have witnessed in our dealings with UNSCOM, however, that it tends to act out of political considerations rather than on the basis of technical and scientific facts.

My country demands that the permanent members of the Security Council — including the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Arab representative on the Council and one of the largest countries of the Middle East genuinely interested in seeing the region free from weapons of mass destruction — participate directly in the work and activities of UNSCOM and in the evaluation of its work and final conclusions. We are quite certain that, if this participation is carried out quickly and scrupulously, the conclusion will be reached, supported by evidence and convincing arguments, that the substantive issues in this file have been resolved as required by resolution 687 (1991) and that it is now time for the implementation of paragraph 22 of the said resolution.

We wish to point out that our most recent experience with work carried out under the auspices of the United Nations has proven that there is a problem with the Organization's structure. This problem is the large imbalance that exists between rights and obligations, in addition to the prevalence of the logic of force, which is not in the provisions of the Charter. The machinery of the international Organization has been used as a tool to implement the foreign policy of certain international super-Powers and to divert the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, from its natural path towards one that clearly contradicts the letter and spirit of the Charter which, as the organizing document of this Organization, forms the constitutional and legal basis upon which the United Nations must rely in all its practices.

The provisions of the Charter dictate that the Security Council shall act in accordance with these purposes and principles when discharging its duties in the maintenance of international peace and security and in adopting its resolutions, whose content and implementation should conform to the principles of justice and international law. There are restrictions that the Council should abide by when adopting its resolutions, which should accord with the purposes and principles of the Organization, so that Member States are able to fulfil their obligation to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council resolutions in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter. The Security Council is not a world Government endowed with the power of legislation and detailed implementation beyond the letter and spirit of the Charter. It is, rather, a United Nations organ that must abide by the legal norms which constitute the legal basis for international legitimacy, embodied in every provision of the Charter of the United Nations.

Believing in the principle of interdependence and in the common interests of all the peoples of the Earth, based on the sovereignty, independence and common concerns of States, Iraq has contributed and continues to contribute to the strengthening of the relations and values of multilateral international action. The poor countries of the southern hemisphere are facing a series of attempts to marginalize, isolate and prevent them from keeping pace with scientific and economic developments. These attempts include raising trade and political barriers to hinder these countries' acquisition of technology and their chances of scientific progress, thereby subjecting them willy-nilly to an economic machinery that furthers only the interests of the large industrial Powers or the rich countries of the North. As President Saddam Hussein pointed out in his speech on Iraq's National Day last July, the battle of the developing countries is the battle of the southern hemisphere for freedom, independence, development, prosperity and the enjoyment of rights and justice.

President Saddam Hussein also pointed out that the United States of America and other international Powers have promulgated slogans publicly calling upon the countries of the South to develop their capabilities and potential, allegedly in order to bale themselves out from underdevelopment, poverty and deprivation. But when Iraq developed its capabilities and potential and used this development and its oil wealth to further its national development and advancement and to enhance Iraqis' abilities and qualifications, the people responsible for the banners and slogans mobilized, under United States leadership, all the forces of evil against Iraq and attacked it with the bombs, missiles and armies of the 30-nation aggression in order to destroy my country's infrastructure and one of the new pillars of development among the countries of the South.

This places on the United Nations a large and historic obligation to shoulder the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter and to ensure the rights of all peoples and countries to peace, development and economic prosperity. The United Nations must be, as its founding fathers wanted it to be, the international instrument for the economic and social advancement of all peoples, rather than an instrument in the hands of a

certain Power that uses it to impose its hegemony on the world by force and blackmail.

In conclusion, I would like to express my country's firm belief that the United Nations, through the strenuous efforts of its working groups on the reform of its structure and methods of work, and thanks to the good will of many of its Members, will in the near future again approach its true potential and capabilities to reject hegemony over it and to accomplish the goals and purposes of its Charter in conformity with international legitimacy and in the interest of the welfare and happiness of all mankind.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

A few representatives have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gnehm (United States of America): The speech we have heard from the Foreign Minister for Iraq is yet another attempt to dress a wolf in the clothing of a lamb. Before responding to the specific misstatements, I must return to the basics. The nature of the Iraqi regime is well known. This the regime that left hundreds of thousands of corpses to rot in fields and swamps in two wars which it initiated against its neighbours and in the one war it initiated, and continues to this day, against its own people. This is the only regime that has ever used weapons of mass destruction against its own citizens, the regime that weaponized such deadly biological agents as botulin and anthrax, the regime that threatened to burn its neighbours with chemical weapons.

The United States and all the other members of the United Nations, and most specifically Iraq's neighbours, know this regime for what it is. No amount of smooth talk here today about international law and legitimacy can erase that knowledge. By its actions, the Iraqi regime deliberately placed itself outside the society of law-abiding nations, a fact recognized in numerous Security Council resolutions. The most important of these resolutions for the security of the Middle East is Council resolution 687 (1991), which bans Iraq from holding or acquiring nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the means to deliver them. The Security Council adopted it because it agreed with all of Iraq's neighbours: Saddam Hussein cannot be trusted with the possession of such weapons.

The statement made today by the Foreign Minister of Iraq is no more credible than when he made it in this Hall one year ago, or when Tariq Aziz made it two years ago or three years ago — that Iraq has somehow fully complied with the Council's resolutions on weapons of mass destruction. There is not a single person in the United Nations or this Hall, and I would include even the Foreign Minister of Iraq himself, who really believes such a statement. However even the Foreign Minister did state and therefore must recognize:

> "The Special Commission ... gave sole responsibility to decide whether Iraq has carried out all its obligations". *(supra, p. 22)*

The Chairman of the Special Commission (UNSCOM), Mr. Ekeus, has constantly noted his conviction that Iraq continues to conceal weapons of mass destruction, the equipment and precursors needed to manufacture them, and great quantities of documents related to those programmes. A few members of the Security Council were willing to believe Iraq when it said it had turned over all documents and equipment. That was before August 1995, when the extent of the Iraqi concealment effort, already well known to UNSCOM, became clear to the world. Since then, not a single member of the Security Council has found this Iraqi claim to full cooperation to be credible. Several times this year Iraq has blocked access by UNSCOM inspectors to particular sites where UNSCOM had good reason to believe that prohibited materials or documents were hidden and where it had an unconditional right to inspect. For the fifth year in a row Iraq has spoken to the General Assembly about closing the weapons file. Iraq is no closer to achieving that goal in 1996 than it was in 1995, 1994 or 1993. That goal will only be achieved when there is a fundamental change in Iraq's attitude toward cooperation with the Special Commission and respect for resolutions of the Security Council. And once again today, Iraq has refused to state clearly that it has given up its intent to acquire weapons of mass destruction in the future. Sadly, there is no evidence that there has been a change in Iraqi behaviour.

And what of Iraq's other obligations, which the Foreign Minister claimed unequivocally had been met? Is this so? Then where are the properties and Government archives stolen by Saddam from Kuwait? And where are the hundreds of armoured personnel carriers, tanks, missiles and aircraft stolen by Iraq? We know the answer to the latter question. These weapons have been integrated into the elite Republican Guard units of Iraq. There will

be no change in the sanctions regime until they are returned.

And where is the information held by the Iraqi Government about more than 600 Kuwaitis, Saudis and other citizens taken by the Iraqi Government from Kuwait to Iraq? Iraqi representatives to dozens of meetings sponsored by the International Committee of the Red Cross have spoken as eloquently as the Foreign Minister, but in the last year they have taken no constructive action to resolve a single one of these tragic humanitarian cases. Again, not a single member of the Security Council agrees with this claim by Iraq. Every 60 days, through 34 sanctions reviews, each member of the Council has called for Iraq to honour all of its obligations towards Kuwait, only to be met with the deception and defiance that we heard from Iraq this afternoon.

I welcome the opportunity to set the record straight with record to the implementation of resolution 986 (1995). The way the Iraqi Foreign Minister has distorted even the most basic facts about this resolution is an insult to the intelligence and humanitarian desires of every member of the Security Council. The Minister complained that it took seven months for Iraq and the United Nations to negotiate an agreement on implementation of Council resolution 986 (1995). Such distortions! The fact is that the Government of Iraq bears the sole responsibility for delaying implementation of an oil-for-food agreement for more than five years. The Security Council first established such a mechanism in September 1991, in its resolution 706 (1991). Iraq negotiated the details in bad faith for more than 24 months before simply walking away from the deal. When the Council again established such an arrangement in its resolution 986 (1995), Iraq rejected implementation for nine months before finally entering negotiations.

The truth is that the Secretariat of the United Nations had informed Iraq in late August that implementation of Council resolution 986 (1995) could begin in the first week of September. Immediately thereafter Iraqi forces launched a military action against the city of Irbil, causing a rapid deterioration in the security situation in northern Iraq.

Let this be clear to everyone, by today's date — 2 October — Iraqi oil could well have been flowing and humanitarian goods already delivered under the terms of Council resolution 986 (1995) had it not been for the action Iraq took on 31 August. That is the only reason for the current delay in implementing the resolution.

Since Saddam Hussein himself has never uttered the word "986" publicly, and has never publicly endorsed its implementation, we assume he remains opposed to it, as he always has been. We are disappointed that we did not hear from the Foreign Minister a promise that he would stop pushing the Secretary-General, who was again attacked viciously in the Iraqi press today, to change the administrative arrangements the Secretariat has already prepared in order to implement resolution 986 (1995). By contrast, the United States view is clear and unchanged. We are proud to be one of the authors and sponsors of Council resolution 986 (1995), and we wish to see it implemented. The United States, like every other member of the Security Council, cares about the suffering of the Iraqi people far more than does the very well fed Iraqi leadership. We look forward to the time that the questions raised by Baghdad's reckless actions in the North can be resolved and the resolution at last implemented.

And finally, I must reiterate a point that I made yesterday. Countries like Iraq try to evade their obligations by attempting to redefine their defiance of Security Council resolutions as a dispute between them and one, two or three other States. But the truth remains that Iraq's obligations to comply are obligations to this Organization, the United Nations. Iraq's defiance of the Security Council is a matter of concern for every delegation in this Hall, but most especially for those neighbours and for those Iraqi citizens who have experienced first-hand the brutality of this Iraqi regime.

Even if Saddam Hussein opposes Council resolution 986 (1995), we favour its implementation, just as we insist upon implementation of Security Council resolutions 687 (1991), 688 (1991), 692 (1991), 707 (1991), 715 (1991) and 1060 (1996). Until Iraq has met its obligations, the United States and the Security Council will not consider the modification of the sanctions regime.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Some who listened to the statement by the Foreign Minister of Iraq may wonder why we have requested to exercise our right of reply in spite of the lack of any specific mention of Kuwait in that statement. My answer is that my delegation would like to comment on what was stated by the Foreign Minister of Iraq:

> "all the obligations imposed on Iraq have been carried out and all the reasons for the imposition of these ... sanctions have been removed". *(supra, p. 22)*

That claim is not founded on present-day realities. That claim cannot be believed by the members of the Security Council, who every 60 days review the level of Iraq's fulfilment of all its obligations. After each review, it becomes clear to all the members of the Security Council — I repeat, all the members — that Iraq has not yet fulfilled its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

With regard to commitments that are directly related to Kuwait, allow me to recall the following. First, as regards prisoners of war and detainees from Kuwait and from third countries, despite the meetings held by the Tripartite Commission in Geneva and by the technical subcommittee, which holds monthly meetings on each side of the border, it has not been possible to close even one single file. Not a single prisoner of war has been returned. It is obvious that Iraq is benefitting from these meetings by using them to demonstrate ostensible cooperation with the committees. What the relevant Security Council resolutions require is serious and complete cooperation by Iraq with the International Committee of the Red Cross to put an end to this humanitarian tragedy as soon as possible.

I turn next to the restoration of stolen Kuwaiti military and other property, including official documents and government records, such as the Emir's records, and those of ministries, including the Foreign Ministry. As for military acquisitions — armoured personnel carriers, Hawk missiles and other weapons — we have provided Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and the members of the Security Council complete lists of all military equipment taken by Iraq. That information was also transmitted to Iraq through the United Nations Coordinator for the Return of Property from Iraq to Kuwait. In the two years since this information was forwarded to the Iraqi side there has been no response. To the contrary, some of this equipment, including tanks, was spotted during Iraq's October 1994 military build-up against Kuwait and its security and stability.

I would like to say this: Let them put their money where their mouth is. The body that defines the level of implementation is the Security Council, not the Iraqi Government. We once again call upon Iraq to release Kuwaiti prisoners of war and detainees, to return Kuwaiti property, fully to implement the provisions of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) regarding weapons of mass destruction, and to fulfil all its other obligations.

We want to end the humanitarian suffering of our brothers in Iraq. The only way to end that suffering is to expedite the implementation of all the obligations stipulated in the relevant Security Council resolutions. Our continued call for speedy implementation of Council resolution 986 (1995) gives evidence of our interest in alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people. We renew once again our call to Iraq to respond quickly to all United Nations requests for the full implementation of that resolution. Security Council resolutions are a legal and political whole that cannot be selectively or partially implemented.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): The version of events which we have just heard from the Foreign Minister of Iraq is simply staggering. In his statement the Foreign Minister has shown yet again the indifference of the Iraqi Government to the plight of its own people. He tried to escape blame for the problems faced by Iraq and its people, and to lay it at the door of others.

The responsibility for Iraq's problems rests with none other than the Government of Iraq itself. They have known for a long time what simple things need to be done to remove the sanctions, and yet they have consistently refused to do them. Let us remember why the Iraqi people are suffering in this way and the fate of the efforts which have been made to help them. As the preceding speaker said a moment ago, the word "Kuwait" does not appear in the Foreign Minister's statement. He seems to have forgotten that sanctions were first imposed following Iraq's unprovoked aggression against a fellow Member State of the United Nations. And even now there are responsibilities to Kuwait under Security Council resolution 687 (1991) which remain unfulfilled. These concern accounting for missing civilians, the return of property and other matters.

Secondly, the Foreign Minister seems to have forgotten to mention that sanctions remain in place only because of Iraq's failure to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and most particularly the failure to meet the obligation to provide a full and definitive accounting of Iraq's programmes of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. In claiming that Iraq has fulfilled the requirements of Council resolution 687 (1991), he is simply misstating the truth — truth which is very apparent from the clear reports of the Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee (UNSCOM). A year ago it might have appeared that the truth was near to being cleared up. But then new information came to light, which was admitted by the Government of Iraq and which required further investigations by UNSCOM. Since then, the pattern of obstruction of UNSCOM inspections in recent months has intensified the suspicion that the regime is hiding elements of its earlier programmes.

When all of this is so well known, the claim that Iraq has fulfilled all its obligations with regard to Council resolution 687 (1991) simply strips the statement of all credibility.

The Iraqi Foreign Minister spoke of the suffering of the Iraqi people, implying that this was also the fault of anyone except his own Government. Notwithstanding the problems regarding weapons of mass destruction, my Government, with others, sponsored Council resolution 986 (1995) in order to alleviate the suffering of the ordinary Iraqi people caused by the actions of the regime.

The offer of oil for food was made first in 1991. Security Council resolution 986 (1995) was passed in 1995. The Foreign Minister did not explain the delays by his Government in accepting that resolution. When it was finally accepted last summer, it would have been implemented by now had the attacks in the North not overturned the basis on which the Memorandum of Understanding was negotiated. We wish to see that resolution implemented as soon as the Secretary-General is sure that the conditions permit.

My Government is not alone in having spent millions of dollars through United Nations and other humanitarian programmes to assist the Iraqi people in this dark hour of their civilization. Concerning sanctions, we will continue to be guided by our concern for the security of the region, and they will remain in place until the resolutions have been dully fulfilled and the threat from Iraq to its neighbours has thereby been removed.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me to respond briefly to the representative of the United States of America. First, let me remind him that people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. Has the representative of the United States forgotten that the greatest crimes against humanity have been perpetrated by his own country? Has he forgotten his country's crimes at Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Has he forgotten his country's crimes in Viet Nam, Palestine, Latin America, Cuba and other parts of the world too numerous to list? Has he forgotten his country's aggression against Iraq and the destruction of the infrastructure of our whole country, taking it back to pre-industrial times on the pretext of liberating Kuwait? Has he forgotten his country's aggression, less than a month ago, using missiles against Iraq? Who authorized the United States to use missiles against Iraq? What vital United States interests were threatened by Iraq's emancipating an Iraqi city from the forces of destruction and evil? Where is the rule of law? Where is the international machinery to preserve peace and security? Is this United States not an illegal act of terrorism? The United States must answer all these questions before it can claim to be an advocate of freedom.

The representative of the United States claimed that we have created instability in northern Iraq. What could be more absurd? Is a State's restoration of peace and security tantamount to creating instability? Has the United States not admitted that it has mobilized thousands of agents and terrorists to wage a civil war in Iraq to topple the Government of that country? Those who support the rule of law do not foment civil wars in other countries. They do not interfere in the internal affairs of States in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms which it claims to uphold.

With regard to the representative of Kuwait, we were bewildered by his long statement on a subject for which this is neither the forum nor the occasion. In our speech, we did not mention his country, as he himself admitted. If he wishes to get on the bandwagon that is his own business.

The meeting rose at 6:25 p.m.